

VZCZCXRO5765
PP RUEHDE RUEHTRO
DE RUEHTU #2534 2841352
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 111352Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2002
INFO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0802
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 7305
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1194
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1647
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 8231
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0403
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 4002
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 0118
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS TUNIS 002534

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NEA/MAG FOR MAYA HARRIS, EB/IPE
USDOC FOR ITA/MAC/ONE (ROTH)
CASABLANCA FOR (FCS ORTIZ)
LONDON, PARIS FOR NEA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [KIPR](#) [AG](#) [FR](#) [MO](#) [TC](#) [UK](#) [TS](#)

SUBJECT: HACKERS BREAK THE CODE TO AL-JAZEERA SPORTS CHANNEL

REF: A. 04 TUNIS 2698

[1](#)B. TUNIS 2140

[1](#)C. TUNIS 1818

[1](#)D. TUNIS 1741

[1](#)E. TUNIS 1590

[1](#)1. According to an As-Sabah Al-Ousboui newspaper article published September 25, 2006, Tunisian hackers have been able to break the encryption code for Al-Jazeera Sports Channel and are now selling bootleg access cards at cut-rate prices. The article tells its readers where they can go to procure the bootleg access card containing the decoded access to Al-Jazeera programs.

[1](#)2. Al-Jazeera Sports is a popular Arabic-language sports channel launched in November 2003 by the well-known Al-Jazeera news channel. It has quickly grown to be the most popular sports channel in the Middle East and has covered a wide range of major international sporting events such as the 2006 African Cup of Nations (soccer). It is based in Qatar and started encrypting its signal in August 2005. Legitimate viewers in Tunisia purchase the Al-Jazeera Sports Channel card ("Irredetto") for TD80 (US61.54) at Moncef Bey market, a well-known parallel market in Tunis (ref A). The card is valid for one year. The hackers have succeeded in decoding the legitimate card and have copied the code onto a "Viaccess" card. The newspaper tells readers that if they want to decode the programs on Al-Jazeera Sports Channel, all they have to do is buy the decoded bootleg "Viaccess" card once a year until 2010 at a cost of TD30 (US24) per year.

[1](#)3. Comment: While the news article is not telling readers how to decode the signal to the Al-Jazeera Sports Channel, it is informing them about where they can go to buy the bootleg "Viaaccess" card containing the Al-Jazeera Sports Channel codes. In effect, this gives bootleg card buyers access to the sports channel without having to pay the higher price of a legal access card or royalties associated with it. The fact that this article was openly published in a Tunisian newspaper, even an "independent" one, sends a clear signal that, in spite of IPR progress on other fronts (reftels B thru E), the GOT still condones the practice of pirating satellite access cards. (Note: The GOT exercises strict control over all newspapers, whether government owned or

nominally independent.) Hackers apparently have no fear of being prosecuted for breaking and selling the codes openly.
End comment.

BALLARD